OUR COLLEGES OVERSPECIALIZE, SAYS DR. RICHMOND

Suffering From Temporary Academic Indigestion, Asserts President of Union, One of the Oldest American Institutions

N the series of articles published recently by The New York Herald from the pens or as interviews of famous educators and dealing with the problems of our great colleges and universities a notable one appears herewith in which Dr. Charles Alexander Richmond, president of Union College, indicates certain mistakes of the modern system of education and indicates a way to correct some of them.

The principal stumbling block in the way of a valuable general education is, he thinks, the multiplying of subjects in the curriculum to include "everything." The college in his view is not the place where "everything" can be taught. Another criticism found by him of weight is that too much attention is being paid to technic and too little to ultimate purpose. In the main, however, President Richmond believes that the worst mistakes are being recognized and corrected.

By BREWSTER S. BEACH.

wide range of courses has its own advan-

"At Union we are committed to the ex-

also has advantages of its own.

anything that we cannot teach well.'

pressed himself fully satisfied neverthe

than at any period of its existence. Stu-

The human side of college education,

student activities, discipline, personal as-

sociation and character building not

founded on text books, is one of the most

interesting aspects of the higher education

problem and one on which THE HERALD'S

discussion has brought forth the greatest

variety of answers. Dr. Richmond is pe-

culiarly fitted to discuss the social side of

letter fraternities were established at Union

College, which was itself founded in 1795,

coming from my next question: Is the

System Is Beneficial

and must work harder to stay in.

Rightly Controlled Fraternity

ECRYING a growing tendency to mand that money shall not be wasted in early specialization and overspecialization, yet firm in the conviction that our American colleges are merely suffering from a temporary attack of academic indigestion, from which they will recover by returning to a simpler and more carefully selected diet, Dr. Charles Alexander Richmond, president of Union Colleg, Schenectady, N. Y., enters THE NEW YORK HERALD'S discussion on American education with some observations, keen in their searching analysis of conditions, yet nevertheless reassuring to those who may have felt that our colleges have been going to the demnition bow-wows."

The true function of higher education. Dr. Richmond believes, is not to turn out into the world the largest number of graduates whose measure of value to the community is to be reckoned by the quantity of knowledge which can be crammed into their heads in four years, nor by their abil-ity to secure at once a highly paid job. In his opinion it is the business of the college to produce men of broad vision, men of insight and imagination, trained to right thinking and to sound judgment; in short, men who shall be qualified to fill the posts occupied by our elder statesmen and preachers and teachers and other leaders who are helping their fellowmen toward their spiritual inheritance

This demand for special vocational subjects is in many instances reducing university courses to mere mechanics' courses. "Many of them are not university courses at all in the true sense," Dr. Richmond remarks, "but times have changed and with them the meaning of words.'

Too Many Subjects Oft

Defeat Best Results "The demand for a multiplicity of subjects is also a great embarrassment," he told his interviewer. And with a smile he leaned forward to illustrate the point:

"When Ezra Cornell established the university which bears his name he said he would found an institution where any student could obtain instruction in any subject.' This, I am afraid, would be called the undergraduate 'a mouthful.' It might have worked in early days, but not in our time.

'As a matter of fact," he continued, "subjects have multiplied like guinea pigs until no university can possibly keep up with them. It's like the New York transit facilities. The supply never catches up to the demand. Many students, especially under an unrestricted elective system, get to the end of their college career feeling much as we do when we get up from a conti-nental table d'hote. We are still hungry. We have had a little of everything and not much of anything. The best part of the dinner is still on the printed menu."

tion in a single subject and the Charybdis of a smattering of too many subjects, there is, Dr. Richmond points out, a middle course which provides at once a careful direction of the student's training, and at the same time a judicious elimination.

"Do not misunderstand me," Dr. Richmond said quickly in response to a half uttered question as to the value of vocational training. "Here at Union we do not mean to yield to the demand for a so-called 'practical education.' Our scheme of education is practical, but practical in a broad way and not in a narrow vocational sense. It was Goethe, I think, who once said that a man must be something before he can be anything. The overemphasis placed on doing, rather than being, recalls a college professor who used to judge the success of his students solely on the basis of their incomes after graduation. Such a man has no business in a college faculty. He ought to be a pawnbroker or the manager of a 5 and 10 cent store."

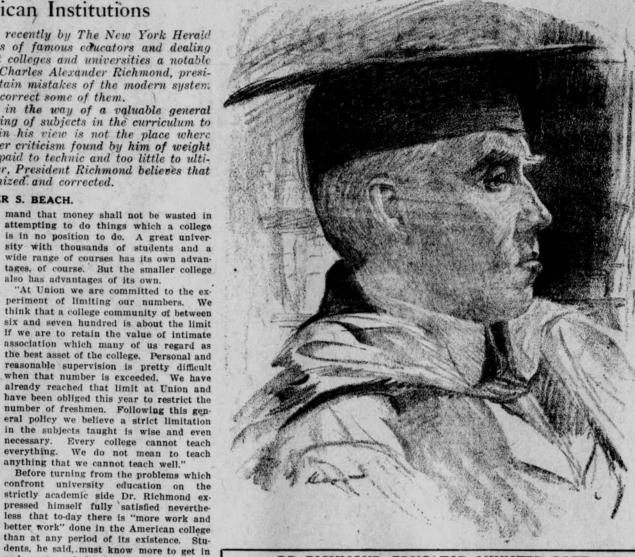
A Broad Education Is

Key to Success Everywhere Give a man a good, broad, general education and he is likely to be a success at anything he chooses to set his hand to, is Dr. Richmond's motto. He was careful. however, to point out that he had no intention of underrating the value of scientific training, but to be effective in any large way this training must rest on a sufficiently solid foundation of broad general knowledge. The old type of classical education is no longer in vogue. It produced fine scholars and fine, capable men. It will be hard to find substitutes for the generous culture which the study of Latin and Greek somehow or other developed in

"How does Union College, for example, hope to meet such problems as you have

'It is a fallacy to suppose," said Dr. Richmond, "that a university can teach everything. A judicious elimination is as necessary to a university as it is to a man. tributors to colleges have the right to de- to make it hard's for his boy to succeed

Dr. Charles Alexander Richmond, president of Union College, who says our colleges need simpler curricula to accomplish better



DR. RICHMOND, EDUCATOR, MINISTER, POET.

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DR. CHARLES A. RICHMOND, president of Union College. He was born of Scotch parentage in New York city in 1862, educated in private schools in New Jersey and received the degree of A. B. from Princeton, 1883. He took his master degree from the same institution in 1886 and entered Princeton Theological Seminary, from which he graduated two years later.

In 1909 he was chosen president of Union College and Chancellor of Union University. Dr. Richmond has been the author of a book of songs and poems and has often contributed verses to leading American magazines. In addition he is the writer of many papers and pamphlets on educational subjects.

Dr. Richmond was some time president of the New York State College Presidents Association, and of the Association of College and Preparatory Schools of the Eastern States.

university, for Union is known as the in his college work and to make it easier mother of the college fraternity. The mafor him to go wrong, he should send him jority of the present big national Greek to college with an automobile.

"Another difficulty we have to contend ties in undergraduate life. Most of them have a distinct value, but they are terrible them are absurdly overdone. Playing jazz

with is the multiplicity of outside activiabsorbers of time and energy, and some of

music on a saxophone may be part of a liberal education, but at least the eight hour law ought to be applied to it. result of these conditions most colleges, I am glad to say, are attempting to curb this picturesque epidemic of misdirected energy by limiting the number of activities

in which any undergraduate may engage." Student self-government in the modern system of higher education is the secret of success in the administration of the American college to-day. The degree of self-government now exercised was undreamed of three generations ago. This is strikingly illustrated by a copy which I was able to secure of the Union College catalogue for 1836. "The government," according to this catalogue, "was parental and preventive." "No student is allowed to risit a tavern or a grocery, to be out of his room at night, or to go out of town without permission." "Nor is any society allowed to hold its meetings at night. Athletic exercises are encouraged and ample

Has High Praise for Athletics, Favors Limited Number of Students and Thinks Fraternities Are Beneficial

recreation to agricultural pursuits."

The policy was evidently one of repression. Students, indeed, were treated like schoolboys. The very idea of self-government would probably have been ridiculed as visionary and impracticable. But to-day at Union there is absolute self-government and Dr. Richmond outlined the system in

"We have a peculiar institution, which is only possible in smaller colleges. Every Monday a college meeting is held of all the students. It is really the town meeting, out of which our whole system of government has been evolved. At that meeting all affairs that concern the student body are discussed and determined. The senior council is in close touch with the adminis-tration, and rare indeed are the cases of discipline that are not handled by the stu-dents themselves. This means that the undergraduate of the present day is disciplined in self-control. He is expected to behave like a gentleman if he does not always attain to the distinction of a scholar. And with very few exceptions he instifles that expectation.

"Of course we have the 'rah rah' boy who is bad and the 'rah rah' girl who is worse. Now and then we get a specimen of budding manhood who seeks distinction among his fellows by joy riding or smug-gling hootch into his room; or the young female of the species who comes to college dances in a lamp shade and a coat of paint; who says damn and blows smoke into the faces of the chaperons. But the gilded youth of the movie films is not the typical college man, nor the baby vamp of the college woman. These are not the product of the college but the product of silly parents, wished on the college and accepted as a forlorn hope, or a depressing

No Smug Satisfaction Among College Heads

"The critics of colleges," Dr. Richmond continued, "need not suppose for a moment that we look upon ourselves with any feeling of smug satisfaction. But those who know college life best agree in the judgment that the heart of the college is sound. Undergraduate public opinion on questions of major importance is all right. The college man stands for clean morality, honorable and just dealing between man and man, love of country and devotion to her noblest ideals.

"At no time in the history of colleges has the devotion of the undergraduate to his college been so marked as it is to-day. He does not burst into tears when the subject of graduation is mentioned, as seniors are said to do at a certain sister institution. Now and then a senior does burst into tears when he is told that he cannot be graduated, but that is another story."

"What now is the ultimate goal toward which college education should be directed. what is the chief purpose of university life, what is the ideal type of graduate which the college is aiming to produce?" This was the final question put to the president of Union. It seemed to have struck a particularly responsive chord, for the answer came back filled with a significance of importance.

"A university must serve the people or it has no right to exist," said Dr. Richmond. "The men whom the university turns out must be serviceable men, men consecrated to the highest interests of the State and the nation. Universities have their points to the higher aims of their profession."

grounds are furnished free of expense to of difference," he continued, "but they are those who prefer devoting their hours of all alike in this; they are all devoted to the highest service and consecrated to the noblest uses

"This, in the broadest sense, is the real purpose of a university. In the past they furnished the leaders in church, in State, in law, in medicine, in education. To-day they are providing leaders not only in the learned professions but the leaders of industry, in commercial enterprises—the men, in a word, to whom we entrust the gravest concerns of the nation in peace

"We must see to it that these men we are sending out are not merely men whom we have taught to win a cheap success for themselves, but men to whom opportunity means responsibility; men in close sympathy with the people because they are of the people. Men who know how to be democratic without being vulgar. Above all, men touched with the fine fire of patriotism caught from the noble spirits of the past, whom they have learned to revere and to love.

Higher Educations Aim Is Defined in the Catechism

"When I was a boy," said Dr. Rich mond, "like all other boys who had Scotch training I had to learn the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The very first question is: 'What is the chief end of man?' and the answer is: 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.' Now, the fine thing about that definition that it establishes a centre at once and lifts the whole conception of life. The sun doesn't revolve about the earth, but the earth revolves about the sun. A sound system of education will do exactly what this old catechism has done. It will estab-lish God as the centre of it. The chief end of education is to develop in man the image of God. To accept any lower definition is to cheapen and stultify the whole

"In my opinion this should be empha-sized with the greatest force. For any one who has kept track of the present current of thought in education must know that there are a great many so-called educators in positions of influence who are so much concerned with the mechanics of the business that they are losing sight altogether of the animating spirit without which the whole process of education is only a barren monotony and the educator a dull dog.
"That is why, were I to offer a general

criticism on higher education in this country, I would say that we are giving too much attention to the technique of education and too little to its ultimate purpose. We say of certain men that they 'cannot see the woods for the trees.' There are plenty of men engaged in higher education who cannot see the college for the students, who cannot see the curriculum for the courses, who confuse methods with results, and who are so busy teaching subjects that they forget they are teaching

boys and girls.
"Of course technique is important. It means economy, efficiency and skill as applied to a man s work. But a mere technician has no business in any seat of authority. He is only fit to be the servant of some one who has more imagination than himself and more understanding of what the thing is all about.

"The great desideratum in higher education and in all education, is men and women whose minds have risen above method and whose eyes have looked beyond

and ranks among the oldest in the country. I had little doubt therefore concerning the kind of answer which would be forth-

WHAT PRESIDENT RICHMOND SAYS OF OUR COLLEGES.

1. Overspecialization especially in the earlier stages of education is a dangerous factor which has a tendency to lower the standards and to limit the higher usefulness of the college.

2. Multiplicity of subjects is an embarrassment which lays the educational machinery of our smaller institutions under too heavy a strain.

3. The problem of university education has been greatly complicated by the enormous increase in registration.

4. Devotion of the student to his college is more marked than at any previous period in its existence.

vious period in its existence.

5. Fraternities, properly conducted, have a beneficial influence on under-

6. Student self-government has in the main approved itself and may be con sidered the key to success in the discipline of college administration.

college fraternity and fraternity system a

beneficial or a harmful influence? cleaner and more wholesome," Dr. Richmond replied. "Interest in athletics has helped to make it so. The influence of fraternities in college life may sometimes be harmful, but I have no hesitation in saying that at Union this influence is upon the whole beneficial. I came to Union with some prejudices against them. Princeton, my own Alma Mater, had abolished fraternities early in the '80s. Since then she has developed the club system, which, in my judgment, has no advantage over the fraternity. In any community there is sure to be a natural grouping. Like will seek like. My experience for the last twelve years at Union has taught me to believe that fraternities, rightly managed, may be a help in creating a democratic atmosphere and can be used by the administration for the encouragement of scholarship and the strengthening of character.

'The supervision exercised by an upper classman over the under classman in the fraternity houses has been of the greatest value. Excepting in rare instances, he is their friend and helper; sometimes even benevolent despot; for however little a senior may enjoy studying himself he takes infinite pleasure in making a freshman study."

Would Cut Out as Nuisance

The Rich Student's Auto Upon the whole, Dr. Richmond believes that the life in the modern American college is healthy and stimulating, full of hope and activity and fairly well directed effort. But here, as on the purely educational side, he sees the problems and difficulties and has the courage to expose them. Two of the worst enemies of undergradulife, says Dr. Richmond, are the inthe minds of college men of an earlier dulgent parent and the automobile, of which he remarks;

'The indulgent parent we always have had to contend with-the automobile is a more modern nuisance. It is an impediment to study and a perambulating moral peril. A college official recently told me that he never knew a freshman who came to college with an automobile who was A college should limit its instruction to able to finish his college course with his that which it is qualified to do well. Con- class. I would say that if a father wants

THAT would happen to a sailing vessel in a strong blow a thousand miles from land if the only persons aboard were a movie cameraman at the steering wheel, a portrait painter and a cartoonist standing by to shorten sail; a poet and a novelist clinging to their typewriters, a sea cook struggling with the stove, an essayist about to hid his breakfast good-by and a doctor of philosophy in command of the whole outfit?

With some such question in mind a reporter went to the National Arts Club to call on Dr. Victor O. Freeburg, president of a company formed to cruise around the world in search of material for articles, books, paintings, sketches and motion pictures. It had been rumored that the p mantic quest, and that the vessel was to be captained by an ex-college professor and manned entirely by writers and artists. "Somebody's pipe dream!" thought the reporter. But he changed his mind after an

hour's talk with the skipper Ph. D.

In the first place, Dr. Freeburg, who has been an instructor in English literature in several colleges, including Columbia University, and is the author of books on subjects as widely different as the Elizabethan drama and the art of photoplay making, is not the type of professor which is sometimes depicted in newspaper cartoons. He does not wear glasses, is still under 40, is a wiry type of Viking stock, was brought up on a West-ern ranch and, what is more to the point, really knows something about seamanship and navigation. He served as an officer in the Naval Reserve from the beginning of participation in the world war after the armistice. His experience includes the command of the flagship in a division of six submarine chasers and duty as watch and division officer on a battleship in the Atlantic Fleet, Besides, he has had many

Atlantic Fleet. Besides, he has had many summers of experience yachting under sall.
"Mr. Frank D. Halsey, Mr. Maurice Eugene Kains and I are the directors and incorporators of the cruising company." said Dr. Freeburg. "Halsey is a Princeton man, was the editor of the Daily Princetonian and was draduated with black become. During was graduated with high honors. During bulance Service in France and later in the aviation service, flying over the St. Mihiel sector. He is interested chiefly in the fiction ssibilities of our cruise.

had experience in most of the large studios here and on the Pacific coast, will have charge of taking motion pictures along the way and also of the exhibition of films which we shall take along."

"Are you going to the South Sea Islands?" "Of course," laughed the professor-skipper. "Every one else goes there. V shouldn't we? But we are not going Tahiti on the first leg of the cruise. eaving New York our first destination is the Venezuela and Colombia to the Panama Canal. From Panama we go to the Gala-pagos Islands, which lie on the equator, about 600 miles westward from Ecuador.

"Next comes the first long leg of the uise, a southwesterly sail of 2,000 miles cruise, a southwesterly sail of 2,000 miles to Easter Island, a lonely spot in the Pacific where they have a regular service of just one ship a year. Then a sail of 1,000 miles westward takes us to Pitcairn Island, that curious place, you know, which is peopled by the descendants of white mutineers and Polynesian women

"It is another thousand miles to Austral Islands, and then a few hundred miles northward to Tahiti, the Mecca of all the true followers of the South Seas. We shall miss the Marquesas, which have been so entrancingly described by Frederick O'Brien, but we shall go westward to the familiar yet ever fascinating Samea and the Fijis. Martin Johnson has proved that the natives still eat 'long pig' in the New Hebrides; well, we shall check him up on our own account. However, we don't pro-pose to go into a very deep study of can-nibalism, even though we shall visit untamed New Guinea and Borneo."

Dr. Freeburg rummaged around for a nautical chart, which he spread out and indicated with a pencil the rest of the route. The line ran along the Federated Malay States, the coasts of India, Persia and Arabia, then via the Suez Canal to the Mediterranean. From Egypt the line swung back along the Asiatic shores, and then along the European shores of the Mediter-

"Now," he continued, "this may sound sen timental, but the last period of our cruise will be an attempt to duplicate Columbus's

courses. Ours is a sailing voyage too.' All sorts of people have applied for permission to accompany Dr. Freeburg, ranging from laundresses in Germany to operatio barytones in America. Some of the successful writers who had applied had never been aboard a sailing vessel, and some of the applicants who could offer mariners' licenses were a bit weak on spelling.

However, between such extremes there was a lot of attractive material available. But the directors of the company are taking their time about selecting shipmates, as the schooner cannot get under way until late in

The ship's work will be so organized that, except in case of emergency, no man will have more than one four hour watch out of every twelve hours while at sea, and when in port each man will have three days of every four entirely to himself. This give ample time for literary and artistic production. Dr. Freeburg insisted, however, that the cruise was not to be bound by any very severe rules.

"We shall not worship either the clock or the calendar," he said. "We shall merely ramble along until we strike something that ramble along until we strike something that puts us in the mood for writing or painting. If a man doesn't produce anything he forfeits nothing; he still gets his bed, board and passage. But everything he does produce is the property of the company, which agrees to realize on it as soon as possible and to pay the author or artist 50 to 70 per

cent, as his share of the receipts."
"Then you are not making contracts with publishers, film exchanges, &c.?" was the in that he would have to retract part of what he had just said, because the company had two or three tentative orders which would

probably have to be filled. "My own interest is almost entirely in the aesthetic side of life in the tropical or sub-tropical countries. I am going to give special attention to such things as native

dancing, pantomimes, drama, games, cere-monials and other art activities, such as batik working, rug weaving, needlework, basketmaking, wood carving, &c. With the help of Mr. Kains, I hope to get up a good series of films on these subjects.

"I am also fascinated by the picturesque-ness of all sorts of watercraft. Every type of vessel, from the hollowed out log to the Solomon Island cance inlaid with mother-of-

pearl, and from the Norwegian barque to the Chinese junk, will pass in review before us, and in their maneuvring, whether at work or play, will furnish splendid subjects for cameras or brushes.

'No, we have not yet purchased our own ship. I have spent several weeks inspecting what the brokers have to offer, but have not as yet settled upon a vessel. You see, we must be a bit careful with our limited funds and dare not close a deal until we strike a real bargain. But we have settled on the type, namely a three-masted mer-chant schooner, built less than ten years ago, about a hundred and fifteen feet long, and thirty broad, about three hundred and fifty tons dead weight, and under the United States flag. She will sleep six men aft, and

States flag. She will sleep six men aft, and four forward.

"A photographic laboratory, for still and motion pictures will be installed in the forward part of the hold. And a new room with skylight will be added just forward of the main cabin to be used as an artist's studio and general exhibition room. A special locker will contain some two hundred historical and general reference books which

locker will contain some two hundred historical and general reference books which have been collected for this cruise.

"And—to jump from the practical to the whimsical—don't be surprised if you see a ship in the harbor some day soon, painted with green and gold sea serpents along ner water line, with orange and black griffins upon the sails, and with silver mermaids clinging to the masts! No Liding seat the dinging to the masts! No, I didn't

clinging to the masts! No, I didn't get the idea from Greenwich Village; I got it from reading descriptions of mediæval ships.

"Speaking seriously, though, the ship will by no means be a painted toy. She will have to earn her own way. We shall carry cargo whenever we can get it for some port lying along our route. Oftentimes, too, we shall accent goods in trade for our reviews or the state of the state o accept goods in trade for our services or for goods which we sell. This will give us a chance to study the everyday business of sea trading and will bring us into vital con-tact with many interesting characters and conditions.

"To the man of poetic temperament there are other thrills besides those of the firing line. To him it is adventure enough to loll in the slanting shadows of tall masts, and to watch the pageantry of the clouds. Let him watch the pageantry of the chandred and stand the night watches in midocean and stand the night experience. He will acquire axalting experience. he will acquire exalting experience. He will become friendly with the stars. He will have a chance to listen in on the winds, and to get in tune with the cadence that runs through the changing moods of the sea."